

GREAT MEADOWS NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE
U.S. FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE
MONTHLY NARRATIVE: FEBRUARY 1993

A. HIGHLIGHTS

B. CLIMATIC CONDITIONS

The month of February was a return to old fashioned winter. Temperatures were below normal and precipitation was nearly normal. Temperatures dipped below 0 on three separate nights during the month and daytime highs struggled to reach the mid 20's during the majority of the month. Over 17 inches of snow fell this month and the ground was covered virtually all the time. In addition to the snow, 1 1/2 inches of rain fell, most of this on the backside of the snow.

D. PLANNING

6. Other

E. ADMINISTRATION

1. Personnel

2/5/93 - A final inspection of the station solar system rehab. contract work was completed. All systems were checked and controls were operated to insure that dampers, over temp. louvers, solar hot water, and controllers were doing what they were supposed to do. After nearly three hours the system was accepted. Contractor, Don Carroll, Engineers, Paul Saulnier and Gary Prime, Mechanical Consultant, Chris Cummings, and R.O.S. David Frisque comprised the inspection team.

2/12&22 - R.O.S. Frisque completed his L.E. Physical

2/19 - Frisque met with Steven Guarante at the Concord unit to discuss work on the restroom facilities. Guarante provided a prospective plumber with an orientation as to the scope of work to be performed under the contract awarded to Guarante.

Carl Melberg, of the RO Office of Realty, is utilizing Refuge office space temporarily.

4. Volunteer Program

Volunteer Jill Miller conducted the Owl Prowl on Feb. 6, a night of record-breaking cold weather, demonstrating the dedication and hardiness of the Refuge Volunteers.

Volunteer Diana Bronner performed the scheduled fish tank maintenance. Installation of running water in the fish tank room has made that job much easier, although no more glamorous.

6. Safety

A staff safety meeting was conducted on Feb. 3. The topic was winter driving skills and was attended by all personnel.

F. HABITAT MANAGEMENT

2. Wetlands

G. WILDLIFE

2. Endangered and/or Threatened Species

A mature bald eagle was reported by a number of local residents to be habituating an area along the Sudbury river near Rte. 27. Reports came to the refuge for a number of days, some from responsible birders.

3. Waterfowl

The cold conditions present throughout the month, coupled with complete ice cover on the Concord impoundments and floodplain of the Sudbury/Concord rivers were responsible for a limited waterfowl presence on the refuge. Surveys of the open water areas on the river resulted in a total of 27 C. geese, 3 mallards, 2 blacks, 4 hooded mergansers, 15 common mergansers, 4 common goldeneye and 1 coot.

4. Marsh and Water Birds

6. Raptors

7. Other Migratory Birds

Carolina wrens were observed by a number of local birders during February. Bio. Tech. Burke likewise heard this species during the month. Apparently this species is extending its wintering range north, and during prolonged cold spells often shows up at residential feeding stations.

One (1) kingfisher was observed on 2/4/93 on the Sudbury river.

10. Other Resident Species

H. PUBLIC USE

1. General

R.O.S. Frisque provided a one hour presentation for 100 cub scouts and their parents on Feb. 10. The topic was cavity nesting birds highlighting the wood duck and bluebird, but discussing numerous other species as well. A question and answer period was provided for the scouts. Refuge mounts as well as wood duck boxes and bluebird boxes were displayed for the scouts to observe.

The Visitor Center first floor display room, the restrooms, hallway, stairwell and lab received a fresh coat of paint.

Two Scenic Rivers Designation Study committee meetings were held in the auditorium. A total of 17 people participated.

The Museum Property Staffing and Funding Needs and the revised Scope of Collections Statement were completed and submitted to the Refuge Manager for approval.

2. Outdoor Classrooms - Students

3. Outdoor Classrooms - Teachers

The refuge received 300 Wildlife Teacher Kits from the National Wildlife Federation. A news release was issued for these poplar kits. A portion was set aside for distribution at Monomoy.

4. Interpretive Foot Trails

6. Interpretive Exhibits/Demonstrations

Volunteer Jill Miller led an owl prowl on Feb. 6 in bitter cold weather. Forty-six visitors, no owls...

18. Cooperating Associations

SuAsCo will receive \$25 for each of three signed and numbered prints of young great blue herons by duck stamp artist Nancy Howe which were sold this month. Missisquoi Refuge will also receive a portion of the proceeds, as the work was commissioned for their refuge anniversary.

I. EQUIPMENT AND FACILITIES

2. Rehabilitation

Some electrical rehab. work was completed at the residence. A

ground fault outlet was installed in the bathroom. A outside deck light was installed on the north side of the house and a replacement outside light was installed at the front of the house. A new outlet was installed in the livingroom and two track lighting units were made operational by replacing two dimmer switches with on/off switches. Total cost, \$235.00.

3. Major Maintenance

Initial work on the handicapped access bridges was begun at the end of the month. Ten foot sections were constructed and numbered for further work at the Concord dikes. Spillways in the Concord dike will be spanned with the bridges to accomodate mobility impaired individuals. Each spillway (2 exist) is approx. 40 ft. in width. Bridge sections will be connected at the spillway sites to ensure accessibilty is met.

Interior painting at the refuge headquarters continued in February. The first floor ORP office, walls along the staircase on all three floors, and the wet laboratory were completed this month.

In addition to painting, Maintenance Mechanic, Sears repaired and replaced numerous flourescent light connections and ballast units in the exhibits and displays in the visitor center.

A feed tube supplying water to the water closets was leaking on the second floor mens room, this tube as well as seven others throughout the headquarters were replaced.

Cold temperatures during the month caused a freeze up of an exit pipe at the Strand property. Initially, a clogged trap was thought to be the problem. Further investigation revealed that a slowly dripping faucet into this drain pipe along an uninsulated section of outside wall, caused the pipe to freeze shut over a weekend period. The pipe was heated until thawed, the leaking faucet was repaired, and no further problems occurred with the plumbing.

4. Equipment Utilization and Replacement

Station chainsaws were repaired during the month. Two Homelites and one McCulloch required work. The clutch assembly on the McCulloch was repaired at Sudbury Rental, the air filter cover was also replaced at the same time. A replacement oil cap for one Homelite saw, and a used body assembly was purchased for a second saw.

The bucket for the John Deere tractor was removed and brought to Caveliers welding. The bucket required a new bottom plate and skids and was also fitted with a new cutting edge.

The station tractor mounted auger was repaired in Feb. Parts were received in Jan. New seals were installed and a new yoke was also

installed.